



Talented and Gifted School for Young Scholars Parent Teacher Association

Mark Levin
Sandra Alexandra
Co-Presidents

Rasheedah Harris
Vice President

Anatoly Garelik
Johnae Ferguson
Co-Treasurers

John Lee
Secretary

MEETING INFO - TAG PTA GENERAL MEETING

Date: Tuesday February 23, 2021
Time: 6:00 PM
Place: Virtual, via Zoom:
Meeting ID: 892 7673 8777; Passcode: 739369
Pre-registration link: <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vcO-vrTMtHdO2l0x5tvVvycGXdGbNjVlv>

Attendance:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Present?</i>
Mark Levin	Co-president	N
Sandra Alexander	Co-president	Y
Rasheedah Harris	Vice President	Y
John Lee	Secretary	Y
Anatoly Garelik	Co-treasurer	Y
Johnae Ferguson	Co-treasurer	Y
Daylym Lopez	Co-VP of Family Engagement	Y
Mylee Zschech	Co-VP of Family Engagement	Y
Elizabeth Butler	VP of Budget	Y
VACANT	VP of Fundraising	--
Felix Garcia	VP of Grants	Y
Steven Leshnower	VP of Audit	Y
Luigi Kapaj	Co-VP of Communications	Y
Marco Tomaschett	Co-VP of Communications	Y
VACANT	VP of Enrichment	--
Mr. Jonathan Dascal	Acting Principal	x
Ms. Jennifer Cosme	Assistant Principal	x

Quorum (minimum 2 executive board members and 6 parent members): Yes

Registration report:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16fVlziyrYGBA1CDKVVSGeV1kD1qnhG_X/view?usp=sharing

Attendance report (usage):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18HYOpw1OkaWNeDnyWqpTdJgpQtLcRVqS/view?usp=sharing>

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order, President’s Welcome**.....6:00 PM
- II. **President’s Report**6:05 PM
- III. **Treasurer’s Report**6:10 PM
- IV. **Principal’s Report**6:15 PM
- V. **School Leadership Team Report**6:35 PM
- VI. **Committee Updates**6:40 PM
 - A. Budget (including COVID Discretionary Funds)
 - B. Fundraising
 - C. Enrichment
 - D. Family Engagement
 - E. Grants
 - F. Communications
 - G. Audit
- VII. **Old Business**7:05 PM
- VIII. **New Business**7:10PM
 - A. Vote to Remove Fundraising VP
 - B. **Nominations & Vote for New Fundraising VP**
 - C.
 - D. **Question and Answer Period**
- IX. **Adjournment**7:45 PM

MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order, President’s Welcome**
 - A. VP Harris called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.
 - B. Pres. Alexandra gave opening remarks touching on G&T and discussions with other schools.
- II. **Treasurer’s Report (co-VP of Treasury Mr. Garelik)**
 - A. Mid-year report submitted to school covering 7/1/2020 - 1/15/2021
 - B. Balance of 246k; a little less than opening balance which is normal because donations usually pick up around mid-year.
 - C. Fundraising behind by 73.4k compared to last year
 - D. Spending is about the same as last year; shifted from committee programming to additional programs to support educating during pandemic (COVID funds)
 - E. Overall we’ve spent just slightly more but had much less income leaving us with 89k less at this point compared to last year.
- III. **Committee Updates**6:40 PM
 - A. Budget (including COVID Discretionary Funds) (VP of Budget Ms. Butler)
 - Meeting coming up; communications will be forthcoming.
 - COVID fund spending available on the PTA website

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- Recently approved yoga mat purchase for Mr. Wong's blended PE program at student's desks.
 - Recently approved Special Ed program support: reading program and online subscription
 - Budget meeting will discuss additional COVID programs. Nothing in the pipeline currently; please bring ideas forward.
 - Question from parent member Ms. Wang about G&T affecting funding. Ms. Butler underlines that TAG doesn't receive additional funding for being G&T so would not affect funding. Distinction drawn between school funding and PTA budget. Acting Principal Dascal jumped in and reiterated that TAG is still a G&T school until told otherwise, and that TAG funding is not affected by G&T policies.

[transition to Principal's Report as Acting Principal Dascal became available]

IV. Principal's Report

- A. Question from parent member Ms. Jain: How will G&T admissions work, in particular with regard to sibling [priority]. Acting Principal Dascal states that G&T principals have the same information that has been given publicly. Any process that happens is supposed to be for this year only. DOE website is the only source of information at this time.
- B. Return of Grades 6-8 Thursday 2/25.
 - Only for blended students. Remote students are still remote.
 - 5 days a week available for Grades 7-8. 75-80% families have chosen this.
 - Grade 6 is too large for 5x/week but will continue to monitor and adjust.
 - Minor schedule tweaks coming to in-person; don't expect any change to remote schedules but things are fluid. Mr. Johnson will communicate any changes.
- C. Ms. Ross (2nd grade teacher) will be returning from leave Wed 2/24.
 - Ms. Ross will sit in with Ms. Stepback's remote class for a few days and take over the remote class starting Monday.
 - Ms. Stepback will return to in-person instruction.
 - Had been planning to open a 2nd in-person class to offer 5x/week but Ms. Sanders is not able to stay on at TAG. Hoping that Ms. Sanders will return quickly at which point TAG will be able to execute this plan.
- D. Third grade is now 5x/week.
 - A few families in K have moved to fully remote which allowed K to move to a smaller room.
- E. RALLY benchmarks
 - Reports of parents helping children; please refrain from doing so.
 - It is important to know what students need support with independently.
 - It is important to allow students to get some things wrong.
- F. Thank Yous to PTA
 - 8th grade able to have graphing calculators to take SHSAT.
 - Yoga mats for Mr. Wong's PE.
 - Achieve3000 has been purchased (Grades 2-8).
 - iXL was purchased for 3rd grade by PTA; TAG went ahead and purchased it for K-8
 - RAZ kids available
- G. Ms Lake (Grade 7)
 - Asst. Principal Cosme reports that Grade 7 is studying mayoral elections; as part of that Ms. Lake reached out to see if any candidates would come speak.

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- Ms. Lake was able to get our Public Advocate Mr. Jumaane Williams to commit to speak with our Grade 7 students.

H. Acknowledgement of Grade 5-6 teachers attending

- Hello from Ms. Cataldi, Mr. Bichko.

I. Q&A

- Parent member Ms. Wang: Will there be remote school in Fall 2021. Acting Principal Dascal hopes that it will be 100% in-person in the fall but it is only a hope. There is no official guidance; Acting Principal Dascal feels it's probably a little too early to make that decision but everything is speculative at this point.
- From the chat: "will there be an opt-in period for remote students to move to blended". Not at this time. Blended can move to remote; remote cannot move to blended. (Except on a case-by-case basis: circumstances must be right and space must be available. Reach out to Mr. Johnson and TAG will make a determination.)
- From the chat: Can we get a % breakdown by grade of remote vs. blended? Acting Principal Dascal doesn't have these numbers in hand but is amenable to sharing it. Overall right now it's about 200/577 are blended.
- From the chat: Any update on Ms. Arabia and when she will be back from leave? Acting Principal Dascal reports that there is no update, and shares why that they cannot share when staff is coming back until they have a guarantee.
- From the chat: any results for AMC8? Acting Principal Dascal has the results but haven't gotten them out yet. Expect them by end of next week.
- From the chat: will there be state tests? Acting Principal Dascal reports that there is no answer. At the beginning of the year they were instructed to prepare. TAG is continuing to do so until instructed otherwise. TAG has no flexibility on the issue, but families in previous years have been able to refuse to take them (this is not an opt-out but a flat refusal.)
- From the chat: Follow up about Mr. Williams' visit - will it be streamed for remote students? Asst. Principal Cosme reports that it will be streamed and available for both in-person and remote students.
- From the chat: Will TAG admit new students to 3rd grade? (And 1st and 2nd as well?) If there are seats available then TAG would have to use the DOE waiting list (which consists of students who had a qualifying score on a G&T test but did not have an available seat). However, it is unclear how many seats are available as there are families who left TAG because of the pandemic but are within the timeframe to return.

V. School Leadership Team Report (Ms. Fiore)

A. Introduced new student reps

- Four or five students from grades 7-8. Largely advocating for more time to engage with each other, better use of asynchronous time, time to socialize.
- Update on principal search: this process is out of TAG's hands. Advertisement went out and should be closed at this time. Candidate pool consists of anyone who wants to apply that is part of the principal pool.
- Roles of counselor: Parents feel Ms. Y may be overextended, and would like a better system to navigate the MS and HS process. Related - the Jupiter system has a lot more functionality that parents are unaware of. Discussed having a "Jupiter 101" document to be distributed to parents. Acting Principal Dascal adds that he had started working on a

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- tutorial video but has not been able to complete it. He's still working on it, but notes that there is a tutorial video available that was produced by Jupiter itself.
- SEL training: Ms. Scott (YMCA coordinator) wanted to update training to incorporate remote and in-person practices.
 - Ms. Lake and Asst. Principal Cosme reported during SLT that teachers are getting professional development with Dr. Mohammed (sponsored by District 4 and Dr. De La Cruz).
 - Asst. Principal Cosme reports on professional development with Dr. Goldhi Mohammed. TAG was thinking about how to layer in social justice movement with education; turns out Dr. Mohammed (who is a scholar in this field) has put together a framework to address this.
 - Mr. Bichko: TAG teachers already do a good job of including current/continuing social issues but meetings with Dr. Mohammed have been very interesting and helpful in the framing of how to restructure lessons and units. Huge emphasis of linking skills to their hearts and the importance of understanding social injustice and bias. Recommend that everyone reads Holes (Louis Sachar).
 - Ms. Cataldi: Today's PD was about assessments and how to diversify them. Doesn't have to be multiple choice and writing assessments only; it can be through project based learning and to explore identity, skill, criticality through other means and provide multiple methods of assessment.
 - Asst. Principal Cosme reports that TAG advocated to have all of their teachers attend these training courses; Dr. De La Cruz was able to accommodate because things have moved to remote platforms.
 - Acting Principal Dascal reports that former Principal Cesar was instrumental in making this opportunity happen for all TAG teachers and leveraged her impending retirement to get this as an outgoing present.
 - VP Harris reports that SLT discussed celebrating Black History Month on a school-wide basis.
 - From the chat: a member wants to know if it's possible to make SEL a separate class in order to foreground SEL. VP Harris reports that SLT has discussed, admin has noted that there's already very limited instructional time and we've lost an additional 5 hours/week this year.

VI. Committee Updates (continued)

A. Family Engagement (Ms. Zschech)

- Tricky to do family engagement with kids because of the different ages and interests. Reached out to class parents to see how to best make this happen.
- Discussion happens at
- 8th grade celebration - coming up, let's talk.
- Q from board member Ms. Ferguson: Can we do something specifically for 7th grade because there isn't a class parent and things feel very disconnected. Ms. Zschech reports that they just got a 7th grade class parent and will be getting everything up and running.
- Q from parent member Ms. Jain: Who is the class parent for 2nd grade? Ms. Zschech: e-mail familyengagement@tagscholarspta.org for information; Mr. Tomaschett provides web URL for information: <https://www.tagscholarspta.org/class-parents.html> (password protected).

B. Grants (Mr. Garcia)

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- A couple of grants have been put in, thank you to everyone who helped (including Ms. Yasuda, VP Harris, Sec. Lee).
 - 412k funding for: 120 laptops, 7 water filler stations (can we get swag bottles via fundraising?), upgraded ADA accessible bathrooms.
 - focus turns to smaller grants now, hope to work one-on-one with teachers. would love parents to come chip in.
- C. Communications (Mr. Tomaschett)
- Meeting 3/12.
 - Revised PTA by-laws. Upcoming vote on updated by-laws.
- D. Audit (VP Harris)
- Worked together with Treasurer for mid-year report.
- E. Enrichment (VP Harris)
- VP of Enrichment resigned, position is still open.
 - Planning for next year is crucial.
- F. Fundraising (Pres. Alexandra)
- VP Harris reports that current VP of Fundraising resigned and we have another vacancy now. Will talk about this more later in meeting. Pres. Alexandra has stepped in for now.
 - iPledge still going but we are behind. Will look to kick off another drive and provide some prizes.
 - TAGwear: hard to pull off previous model of maintaining and distributing inventory. We are looking at online vendors that can print and ship on demand. Might have some reduced TAG wear options.
 - Book fair just happened along with a coloring competition; thank you to participants and we will be judging soon.
 - Looking ahead: Mid-april fun run, will not do gala.
 - Fundraising needs help! Even if not in VP role, all of these initiatives can use parent help.

VII. New Business

- A. VP of Fundraising is vacant due to resignation.
- B. Nominating Committee
- Kicking off the process for electing the 2021-2022 TAG PTA Executive Board
 - The Nominating Committee: shall consist of three to five volunteers, none of whom are members of the executive board or plan to run for office. The nominating committee shall solicit nominations for candidates from the general membership and individuals may also submit their own names to be candidates for office in writing. In addition to written nominations, the committee may also provide an opportunity to accept nominations from the floor at a general membership meeting prior to the close of nominations.
 - SLT member Ms. Fiore agreed to be part of the Nominating Committee.
- C. Floor opened for nominations for VP of Fundraising
- No nominations were recorded.
- D. Floor opened for nominations for VP of Enrichment
- No nominations were recorded.
- E. Question and Answer Period
- CEC (community education council) elections are upcoming; first year that all parents may vote. This is the last week to apply for a seat on the CEC. Keep an eye out for more information. There will be an upcoming District 4 candidate forum.

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- Parent member Ms. Gotama raises the issue that in-person students are being given unsupervised access to laptops during break time (specifically 1st grade). Also expectations have not been made clear to in-person students -- including the submission of daily classwork. VP Harris notes that the PTA mission is to support our parent members and these specific classroom issues can be taken to the specific teacher and the administration.

VIII. Adjournment

- A. VP Harris motions to adjourn at 8:02 PM; Mr. Tomaschett seconds and the motion carries.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary John Lee.

Minutes approved by General Membership on March 16, 2021.